

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, the method comprising:
 - receiving and storing at a media delivery device a plurality of targeted advertisements, wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are selected for transmission to the media delivery device by a transmitting entity based on user data associated with the media delivery device;
 - receiving and storing at the media delivery device data representing a set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements;
 - receiving a signal at the media delivery device authorizing insertion of an advertisement into [[the]] a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, wherein the signal is sent with the broadcast media programming, and wherein the signal includes selection data specifying an allowable type of the advertisement that is authorized to be inserted into the media delivery stream;
 - identifying a set of allowable advertisements from among the plurality of targeted advertisements by searching the data representing the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements using the selection data, wherein the set of allowable advertisements includes advertisements that are of the allowable type;
 - selecting a particular advertisement from the set of allowable advertisements to be inserted into the media delivery stream by applying a weighting to at least one characteristic of each of the allowable advertisements of the set of allowable advertisements and comparing at least one weighted characteristic of each of the allowable advertisements, wherein the at least one weighted characteristic includes at least whether a user switched channels during a most recent playback of a particular targeted advertisement; [[and]]
 - inserting the particular selected advertisement into a particular location in the media delivery stream identified by the signal; and

identifying an advertising fee associated with insertion of the particular advertisement at the particular location in the media delivery stream identified by the signal,
wherein the advertising fee is a first advertising fee when the particular advertisement is a local advertisement for a provider of a product or service that is inserted at a first location in the media delivery stream that follows a national advertisement for the product or service, and
wherein the first advertising fee is higher than a second advertising fee that is associated with insertion of the local advertisement for the provider of the product or service at a second location in the media delivery stream.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are television commercials.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the media delivery device is a set top box device for receiving to receive broadcast signals [[for]] from one of a cable television network system [[or]] and a satellite television network system.

4-7. (Canceled).

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are received by the media delivery device as encoded data files through a telecommunications link to an external database of advertisements.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
transmitting signals between the media delivery device and an external network, the signals including the user data associated with the media delivery device, wherein the user data indicates types of advertisements that appeal to users of the media delivery device.

10-23. (Canceled).

24. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium containing instructions for performing acts when executed on a computing device, the acts comprising instructions that, when executed by a computing device, cause the computing device to:

receiving receive, at a media delivery device, a plurality of advertisements;

storing store, at the media delivery device, a plurality of targeted advertisements of the plurality of advertisements, wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are selected based on user data associated with the media delivery device;

receiving and storing receive and store, at the media delivery device, data representing a set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements;

receiving receive a signal at the media delivery device authorizing insertion of an advertisement into a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, wherein the signal is sent with the broadcast media programming, and wherein the signal includes selection data specifying an allowable type of the advertisement that is authorized to be inserted into the media delivery stream;

identifying identify a set of allowable advertisements from among the plurality of targeted advertisements by searching the data representing the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements using the selection data, wherein the set of allowable advertisements includes advertisements that are of the allowable type;

selecting select a particular advertisement from the set of allowable advertisements to be inserted into the media delivery stream by applying a weighting to at least one characteristic of each of the allowable advertisements of the set of allowable advertisements and comparing weighted characteristics of each of the allowable advertisements, wherein the weighted characteristics include at least whether a user switched channels during a most recent playback of a particular targeted advertisement; [[and]]

inserting insert the particular selected advertisement into a particular location in the media delivery stream; and

identify an advertising fee associated with insertion of the particular advertisement at the particular location in the media delivery stream identified by the signal,

wherein the advertising fee is a first advertising fee when the particular advertisement is a local advertisement for a provider of a product or service that is inserted at a first location in the media delivery stream that follows a national advertisement for the product or service, and

wherein the first advertising fee is higher than a second advertising fee that is associated with insertion of the local advertisement for the provider of the product or service at a second location in the media delivery stream.

25-30. (Canceled).

31. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 24, wherein the weighted characteristics of each of the allowable advertisements that are compared further include at least one of a contract condition associated with each of the allowable advertisements, a type of product or service advertised, and a relative pricing of the product or service advertised.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of advertisements comprises a content type field and wherein identifying the set of allowable advertisements comprises applying a bit mask to the content type field of each of the plurality of targeted advertisements to identify allowable advertisements from a hierarchy of categories, wherein general category types are masked with high order bits and more specific category types are masked with low order bits.

33. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 24, wherein the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of advertisements comprises a content type field and wherein identifying the set of allowable advertisements comprises applying a bit mask to the content type field of each of the targeted advertisements to identify allowable advertisements from a hierarchy of categories, wherein general category types are masked with high order bits and more specific category types are masked with low order bits.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the set of characteristics includes information categorizing each of the plurality of targeted advertisements within a hierarchy of categories.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein the selection data further includes categorization data designating a location in the hierarchy of categories, wherein the particular ~~selected~~ advertisement includes a closest advertisement in the hierarchy of categories to the designated location.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
gathering the user data at the media delivery device; and
sending the user data and a unique identifier of the media delivery device to [[a]]the
transmitting entity.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
gathering the user data at the media delivery device;
determining, based on the user data, whether a particular targeted advertisement of the plurality of targeted advertisements is ineffective; and
deleting the particular targeted advertisement from the media delivery device when the particular targeted advertisement is determined to be ineffective.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one weighted characteristics further include characteristic includes a frequency at which a particular targeted advertisement of the plurality of targeted advertisements has been inserted into the media delivery stream.

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one weighted characteristics further include characteristic includes an amount to be paid by an advertiser.

40. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one weighted characteristics further include characteristic includes an expiration date of a contract with an advertiser.

41. (Canceled).

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the selection data further specifies one or more restricted types of advertisements, and wherein the method further includes excluding advertisements of the restricted types from the set of allowable advertisements before selecting the particular advertisement to be inserted into the media delivery stream.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the selection data further specifies one or more prohibited sponsors of advertisements, and wherein the method further includes excluding advertisements associated with the one or more prohibited sponsors from the set of allowable advertisements before selecting the particular advertisement to be inserted into the media delivery stream.

44. (Currently Amended) A media delivery device comprising:
a network interface to receive a plurality of advertisements;
a memory to store a plurality of targeted advertisements that are selected as targeted
advertisements based on user data associated with the media delivery device and
to store data representing a set of characteristics associated with each of the
plurality of targeted advertisements; and
a processor coupled to the network interface and to the memory, the processor adapted to:
detect a signal authorizing insertion of an advertisement into a media delivery
stream during broadcast media programming, wherein the signal is sent
with the broadcast media programming, and wherein the signal includes
selection data specifying an allowable type of the advertisement that is
authorized to be inserted into the media delivery stream;
identify a set of allowable advertisements from among the plurality of targeted
advertisements by searching the data representing the set of characteristics
associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements using the
selection data, wherein the set of allowable advertisements include
advertisements that are of the allowable type;
select a particular advertisement from the set of allowable advertisements to be
inserted into the media delivery stream by applying a weighting to at least
one characteristic of each of the allowable advertisements of the set of
allowable advertisements and comparing weighted characteristics of each
of the allowable advertisements, wherein the weighted characteristics
include at least whether a user switched channels during a most recent
playback of a particular targeted advertisement; [[and]]
insert the particular selected advertisement into a particular location in the media
delivery stream; and
identify an advertising fee associated with insertion of the particular
advertisement at the particular location in the media delivery stream
identified by the signal,
wherein the advertising fee is a first advertising fee when the particular
advertisement is a local advertisement for a provider of a product or

service that is inserted at a first location in the media delivery stream that follows a national advertisement for the product or service, and wherein the first advertising fee is higher than a second advertising fee that is associated with insertion of the local advertisement for the provider of the product or service at a second location in the media delivery stream.

45. (Currently Amended) The media delivery device of claim 44, wherein the plurality of advertisements received by the network interface include the targeted advertisements selected based on the user data associated with the media delivery device and one or more additional advertisements that are not targeted advertisements, and wherein the processor is further adapted to:

determine whether a particular received advertisement received is a targeted advertisement based on the user data;
search the memory to determine whether the particular received advertisement is already saved in the memory when the particular received advertisement is a targeted advertisement; and
save the particular received advertisement at the memory when the particular received advertisement is not already saved in the memory, and not save the particular received advertisement when the particular received advertisement is already saved in the memory.

46. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one weighted characteristic further includes at least one of an amount of time that [[the]] a particular targeted advertisement was viewed by [[the]] a user during [[the]] a most recent playback and whether the user switched channels during the most recent playback of the particular targeted advertisement.